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ABSTRACT

This document explores whether state certification of adult educators can contribute to a more professional work force. The document begins by listing perceived advantages and disadvantages of certification and defining certification. The following reasons for supporting certification are presented: assuring professional competence; promoting professionalism; improving academic programs; and achieving greater work force retention. The following types of learning leading to certification are identified: single workshops, conferences, workshop series, summer institutes, university coursework, peer coaching, action research, and self-directed learning. Discussed next are the following certification-related concerns: losing teachers to better-paying jobs; exclusion of current and potential teachers; lack of significance; and lack of data. Existing state certification policies and practices are reviewed. The questions of whether English-for-speakers-of-other-languages instructors and volunteer instructors should be certified are considered. Presented next are case studies of efforts to increase the professionalism of adult education systems through certification in Minnesota, Kansas, and Arkansas. The case studies' findings are summarized to show that the positive effects that developing certification policies can have on states' commitment to adult education and on relationships among educators at the state and local levels. Twenty-nine endnotes are provided along with annotated listing of 12 recommended resource materials and organizations. (MN)

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State Policy Update

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The Professionalization of Adult Education: Can State Certification of Adult Educators Contribute to a More Professional Workforce?

- August 30, 2000 -

In the last two years there has been a surge of interest in teacher professionalization in the field of adult education, brought on by increased federal, state, and local attention to issues of accountability. The K-12 and adult education standards movements have also brought heightened attention to teacher credentialing and teacher competencies programs.

Implementing teacher certification requirements is the primary way states have responded so far to the emphasis on higher standards and efforts to define performance indicators through state legislation and at the program level. A recent survey by the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC) reveals that roughly half of all states and territories require certification for adult education instructors.

This State Policy Update reviews the current status of state implementation of teacher certification requirements for adult education instructors and highlights the ways three states – Minnesota, Kansas, and Arkansas – have chosen to implement standards for adult education instructors.

With an increased emphasis on standards and reporting at the national, state and local levels, many adult educators are looking to professionalize their field as a way to ensure high quality programs and services. Since adult education and literacy instruction, unlike elementary and secondary education, has no commonly recognized credential, several states are developing teacher certification processes – and many already have processes in place – in an effort to ensure high quality instruction and positive learner outcomes.[1]

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The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 established a new performance accountability system for adult education, requiring each state to provide an annual report on its progress to the US Secretary of Education. As a result, the National Reporting System (NRS), developed by the US Department of Education, includes indicators that attempt to measure professional quality in adult education. One way some states are working to ensure the continuous improvement required by the law is by implementing teacher professionalization efforts, including credentialing or certifying adult education instructors.

The focus on professionalizing the adult education workforce has been driven by activities nationwide. A prime example is the National Literacy Summit 2000 Draft Action Agenda, which was contributed to by hundreds of members of the literacy field, and which lists professional development as a high priority for strengthening the literacy field.[2]

A recent study and literature review conducted by Columbia University researcher Dolores Perin found that many in the literacy field see advantages and disadvantages to professionalizing the adult literacy field. (See sidebar.) Perin acknowledges that, for many of the advantages identified, there has been no research indicating that professionalism leads to the intended outcomes. The factor

Advantages and Disadvantages of Professionalization

Advantages

Professionalization may:

- **Instill standardization and structure**
- **Make information on services available to learners**
- **Promote high quality teaching**
- **Encourage ongoing training via certificate renewal**
- **Ensure teachers have special knowledge of adult learning**
- **Enhance professional prestige of field.**

Disadvantages

Professionalization may:

- **Eliminate staff – such as those who do not have access to graduate education, or volunteers**
- **Restrict entry into the field**
- **Increase bureaucratic control**
- **Not necessarily imply competence, expertise**
- **Stifle creativity and innovation**
- **Entail government intrusion into local programs.**

Source: Perin, Dolores. Professionalizing adult literacy: Would a credential help? *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. 42:8, May 1999.

of whether professionalization efforts, such as certification, are mandatory or optional may determine which advantages and disadvantages apply.[3]

All in all, there seems to be agreement throughout the literacy field about the importance of improving professional development, and many states have decided that teacher certification may be one way.

What is Certification?

As defined by University of Illinois researcher Timothy Shanahan and his colleagues, "Certification is … the requirement of some specific standard of knowledge, training, or education for entry into a field. Such requirements are not necessarily external to a profession. Although they could be imposed by a government agency through licensure, the members of the profession could conceivably establish them themselves. Professionalization has to do with the preparation and ongoing learning of quality teachers, while certification is just a mechanism for imposing this training standard."[4]

Certification requirements include a number of inservice and preservice formats, such as university coursework, self-directed study, and participation in workshops or summer institutes that focus on adult education.

Definitions

A *professional* is one who has an assured competence in a particular field.

***Professionalization* refers to the movement of any field toward some standards of educational preparation and competency. The term professionalization indicates a direct attempt to:**

- **Use education or training to improve the quality of practice**
- **Standardize professional responses**
- **Better define a collection of persons as representing a field of endeavor**
- **Enhance communication within that field.**

***Certification* is … the requirement of some specific standard of knowledge, training, or education for entry into a field.**

Source: Shanahan, Meehan and Mogge. *The Professionalization of the Teacher in Adult Literacy Education.* NCAL. September 1994.

Why Certify?

The adult literacy field faces numerous challenges, including limited financial resources for programs, high instructor turnover, and the lack of a unified adult education research base.[5] A large majority of adult education teachers are part-time (87 percent in 1993), and often receive little training and experience high turnover.[6]

Many in the field are working toward professionalizing the adult education workforce, in an effort to instill uniform standards of quality, improve learner outcomes and teacher working conditions, and otherwise improve adult education programs and services. Many state leaders have implemented certification requirements for adult education teachers in an effort to increase the field's credibility, eliminate ineffective teachers, attract more funding, and raise educational quality.[7]

One of the main reasons given for the importance of increased professional development opportunities is quality – to make sure teachers are well-equipped to provide the high quality instruction adult learners require and expect. There is an assumption that the quality of teaching and learning is dependent on the quality of the teacher, and an inadequately trained teaching force is a key obstacle to improving adult education services.[8] Differences in the way children and adults learn indicate that different training is necessary to learn how to teach adults, even for teachers who are highly experienced in teaching children to read and write.[9] However, there is no empirical evidence to connect the quality of teachers to learner outcomes in the adult education field. There is some evidence of the connection in K-12 research, but currently this is still an assumption with regard to adults.[10, 11]

Reasons for Supporting Certification Include:

- **Assuring professional competence**
- **Promoting professionalism**
- **Improving academic programs**
- **Achieving greater workforce retention.**

Source: Shanahan, etal. *The Professionalization of the Adult Literacy Teacher.* NCAL. September 1994.

What Counts Toward Certification?

- **Single Workshops: one session focused on a specific topic without follow-up**
- **Conferences: a day or two of workshops and plenary sessions on various topics**
- **Workshop Series: a sequenced group of training sessions, each drawing upon prior training**
- **Summer Institutes: full-day training over a period of time during the summer, followed up by one or more workshops during the year**
- **University Coursework: a weekly or monthly class**
- **Peer Coaching: teachers instructing teachers**
- **Action Research: teachers identify questions that interest them and n conduct research in their own teaching environments as they work with their students**
- **Self-directed Learning: the adult education teacher or volunteer instructor determines the areas in which he or she would like to receive training and how to go about getting that training. Self-directed learning can include teacher-sharing groups, study circles, and mini-grants to instructors to do their own reading or research.**

Source: Kutner, Mark. *Staff Development for ABE and ESL Teachers and Volunteers.* ERIC Digest. National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education. September 1992.

Perin's article, *Professionalizing adult literacy: Would a credential help?*, reports the results of a survey of members of the Adult Literacy Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association. Ninety-three percent of respondents answered "yes" or "maybe" to the question of whether there should be a state credential for adult educators, and indicated the need to address issues such as the low morale of part-time personnel, training literacy providers, and the overall quality of instruction. Perin points out that these responses highlight the importance of adequate funding and suggests that "a professionalized workforce [i.e. one with credentials] could join bargaining units and command higher rates of pay."[12]

David Rosen, moderator of the National Literacy Advocacy (NLA) listserv, surveyed the roughly 650 members of the NLA list about what kind of "return on investment" adult educators received for pursuing professional development or certification. For

example, he asked whether adult educators received higher salaries as a result of completing courses or earning adult education certification. Rosen concluded from responses that "adult education teachers in public schools and community colleges (in most cases when they are part of a bargaining unit) sometimes do receive the same return on investment as colleagues in K-12 and higher education."[13]

For example, Norene Peterson of the Adult Education Center in Billings, Montana, responded that ABE teachers at the Billings Adult Education Center are part of the certified teaching staff of School District #2, and on the same salary matrix as all other District teachers. Salary raises are negotiated by the teachers' union and based on years of experience and credits earned. Peterson said, "We are fortunate, for we know that not all ABE systems are like this... Fortunately, as of yet our District still sees the value of ABE."[14]

On a statewide level, Louisiana has offered a certificate for adult education for the past 12 years, and recently wrote a requirement into its state plan that all full-time adult education instructors must participate in at least 15 hours of professional development each year. Part-time instructors must earn a minimum of 10 hours each year. The State Literacy Resource Center (SLRC) in Louisiana provides free workshops to help teachers meet the training requirements. Such workshops have received a great deal of interest. Pam Wall, Director of the Louisiana SLRC, reports that the state does not require local school districts to increase the salaries of teachers who are certified in adult education, which requires K-12 certification with an additional 12 graduate level hours in adult education. At the same time, the state's performance-based funding formula includes certified teachers as one of the 10 variables for funding a program. Wall states, "whereas teachers who gain additional certification in adult education are not rewarded with higher wages in state law, programs are rewarded in the funding formula for using them. Therefore, the programs usually pay fees for training, grad courses, etc. In addition, the SLRC arranges coursework in collaboration with universities, and the Division of Adult Education uses State Leadership funds to pay tuition of teachers in our funded programs who are working toward adult education certification." In the end, State Director Debbie

Faucette reports, teachers are rewarded financially: certified teachers earn roughly twice the amount of a non-certified instructor.

Concerns about Certification

While many states require some kind of certification for adult education teachers, there are concerns in the field about the limitations a mandatory certification process could place on literacy programs and instructors. Some of these concerns include:

- *Losing teachers to better paying jobs.* Teachers might move from adult literacy into elementary and secondary education if they are required to earn certification. They might not remain in a field in which they earn less for the same or greater amount of training and education.
- *Exclusion of current and potential teachers.* Current and potential teachers and adult learners who do not meet the minimum educational requirements of a certificate, such as a bachelor's degree, may be excluded from becoming adult literacy instructors. The concern is that current and potential teachers will not be able to afford the time and expense of pursuing further education. This applies also to part-time and volunteer instructors who may not be able to pursue certification requirements.
- *Lack of significance.* If the certification is based solely on seat time rather than teacher competencies, the certification may not be likely to improve teaching or program quality. To enhance the field, teacher professionalization efforts must help teachers in the classroom.
- *Lack of data.* There is currently no data linking certification with teacher performance and student outcomes. Research and demonstration on the effect of certification requirements need to take place.

What are States Doing?

A recent national survey by the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC) found that many states have grappled with the issues of exclusion, requirements for full versus part-time instructors, whether to make a certification mandatory or optional, and how to encourage participation if the program is optional. Many have tried to find compromises. Using these survey responses as a base,

National Institute for Literacy staff contacted many states and territories to gather additional information about certification requirements. This State Policy Update includes information from 53 states and territories, 51 percent of which reported that they require certification for teachers of adult education.

- Kansas took a dual approach in order to prevent excluding potential and current teachers. It developed a credential that grandfathered in existing teachers who would not otherwise qualify at the time of the credentialing program implementation. The state also allows for adult literacy instructors to be credentialed with a high school diploma or the equivalent, while at the same time requiring extensive teacher training in order to receive the credential. While a credential is not mandatory in Kansas, the percentage of credentialed teachers in programs was written into the state plan as a quality indicator for funding this spring.

Which States and Territories Require Certification for Adult Educators?*

Alabama	**Mississippi**
Arizona	**Missouri**
Arkansas	**North Carolina**
California	**Pennsylvania**
Connecticut	**South Carolina**
Delaware	**Tennessee**
Florida	**Texas**
Indiana	**Utah**
Kansas	**Washington**
Kentucky	**Wisconsin**
Louisiana	**Guam**
Maine	**Northern Mariana Islands**
Michigan	
Minnesota	**Virgin Islands**

*** No response from Idaho, New York or Puerto Rico.**

- Some state adult education programs use hiring practices that are much more rigorous than what is required by state department of education regulations. There is a concern that, after mandating specific requirements, states and programs may face a lack of qualified teaching applicants. Although programs may be more demanding, they do not encourage state statute to correspond with their hiring practices, given the limited resources available for adult education. However, officials from states that have certification requirements, including Arkansas, Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, and Wisconsin, have indicated that certification was an effective means of ensuring program quality despite some of the difficulties involved.[15]

- Many states with a very high percentage of part-time teachers have implemented certification requirements for both full and part-time teachers in an effort to improve overall quality. Delaware has required an adult education certificate since 1987 for full and part-time teachers. Roughly 99 percent of Delaware's adult education teachers are part-time. Most Delaware adult education volunteers are certified through LVA or LLA programs.

- States such as South Carolina have different requirements for teachers in different areas. South Carolina requires K-12 certification for all adult education teachers, but does not offer certification specifically for teaching adult education. However, for teachers who are teaching in South Carolina diploma programs, subject area certifications are required. For ABE teachers, elementary or secondary certification is accepted. Tutoring classes (defined as groups of five or less) do not require certified teachers. Teachers in South Carolina workplace programs must be certified or work under a certified teacher. Additionally, they must have a certificate of workplace certification issued by South Carolina's Workplace Resource Center.

- Massachusetts is in the process of developing a teacher certification program. In 1998, the Massachusetts Legislature directed the Department of Education to develop an optional certificate that would be available to teachers of ABE. The Massachusetts Department of Education's

Massachusetts Goals in Developing an ABE Teacher Certificate

- **Reflect the unique characteristics of the field of ABE**
- **Identify what adult basic educators need to know and be able to do**
- **Integrate the goals of the state ABE Curriculum Frameworks**
- **Respond to the needs and concerns of a largely part-time workforce of ABE practitioners**
- **Recognize and value the expertise of experienced ABE practitioners.**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, *The Development of ABE Certification,* ***Second Interim Report, Executive Summary*****. May 2000.**

Office of Teacher Certification and Credentialing, Adult and Community Learning Services, and the ABE Teacher Certification Advisory Committee have made numerous recommendations toward establishing a certificate for teachers of ABE. Recommendations include setting goals for developing a certificate, ABE teacher competencies, the form of the certificate, four routes to obtain the certificate, and practica requirements of the certificate.

- Alabama offers an adult education certificate for both full and part-time teachers. It is not mandatory, but teachers who have this certification qualify for a higher salary. Despite this, most of Alabama's adult education teachers, who are part-time, are not certified in adult education.

- For roughly 25 years, the U.S. Virgin Islands have required certification for all full-time adult education teachers. The certification requires a master's degree in education, but not adult education specifically. (Eight hours of annual inservice and preservice training in how to teach adults is also required.) The Virgin Islands director of adult education reports no shortages of full-time teachers.

- Many states, such as Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Mississippi require K-12 certification of adult education teachers, but do not offer an adult education certificate specifically.

- Many other states, such as New Mexico, have no certification requirements for adult education teachers. New Mexico is taking a cautious approach to teacher certification. Most of its adult education programs are run through postsecondary institutions with their own mandates, and state leaders are wary of putting too many mandates on the programs. State Director of Adult Education Nora Munzamares reports that they are holding preliminary conversations within the field to explore what would work best in New Mexico.

Should ESOL Instructors be Certified?

Issues for teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are similar to those of general adult education teachers. Roughly 80 to 90 percent of ESOL instructors are part-time, without benefits or contracts, and are often volunteers.[16] Many states report that they include ESOL teachers in their adult education certification requirements, but in several states there is no requirement beyond a college degree to teach ESOL.[17]

According to researcher JoAnn Crandall, most ESOL literacy teachers have college degrees, but the degrees may be in a variety of fields, such as in elementary and secondary education. Even ESOL teachers with degrees in reading may have little preparation for teaching literacy in a second language. Until several years ago, master's degree programs for ESOL educators focused on the needs of elementary, secondary, or university students, not on adults with limited education. "For many adult ESOL teachers, staff development consists of voluntary attendance at workshops, conferences, or seminars for a day or two per year. Literacy volunteers, working in a one-to-one tutoring situation, often receive only 15 to 20 hours of preparation during the first year of teaching, with even less training in subsequent years."[18]

Because of a tremendous demand for adult ESOL literacy teachers and the varied needs of adult ESOL literacy learners, the ESOL literacy community has grappled with how to decide who is qualified to teach. Concerns about professionalizing teaching are reflected in calls for strong academic credentials, but credentialed teachers who understand literacy issues and have experience teaching adults with language differences are difficult to both find and retain.[19] As is true for adult literacy teachers as a whole, the ESOL community is trying to ensure competence and foster professionalism "without establishing rigid certification requirements that deny professional opportunities for good teachers who lack academic credentials."[20]

Crandall reports that discussions about certification and credentialing are taking place among ESOL literacy professionals. She concludes that "better employment

conditions in adult education, ESOL, and literacy (i.e. professionalization) will undoubtedly lead to more qualified individuals entering the field and remaining there, but what is also needed is the establishment of a variety of ways through which individuals can both acquire and demonstrate their professionalism in the field."[21]

What about Certification for Volunteer Instructors?

Amid the debates about professionalizing and credentialing in the adult literacy field is a question of how volunteer tutors will be affected. Some states, such as Kansas, have addressed this issue by encouraging volunteer tutors to participate in state credentialing activities. Other states such as Arkansas and Delaware rely on LLA or LVA to train volunteer tutors.

Recent attention to quality and accountability has increased demands on volunteer programs, and the two national literacy volunteer programs, LVA and LLA, have responded. LLA provides national trainer certification, which requires continuing education of volunteers. LVA affiliates offer credentialing programs that have been developed according to local needs. LLA has plans for training, technical assistance, and support in the design of tutor training based on the assessment of learner needs. A three-part video management training series has been produced jointly by LVA and LLA.[22] However, despite a strong movement toward professionalization, many volunteers do not receive professional training and support.[23]

Case Studies

Minnesota, Kansas, and Arkansas are three of the many states that have decided to increase the professionalism of their adult education systems by requiring adult educators to obtain a specific teaching certification or credential. Though all three states have the same goals, the design and development of each program is quite different. The following case studies describe those differences.

Minnesota

Minnesota requires all adult educators to have a K-12 certificate, and offers an optional adult basic education (ABE) certificate only available through the University of

Minnesota. Because of the geographical constraints of offering the ABE certificate coursework in only one location, the Minnesota legislature enacted a new law requiring the development of a competency based ABE certificate program that is accessible to teachers statewide.

Fifteen years ago, the Minnesota legislature enacted a law requiring a K-12 certificate for full and part-time state public school ABE teachers. Most ABE teachers teach through the public school system, and those who teach in non-profit organizations are not required to be certified. Until recently, this requirement applied to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs as well. However, in recent years programs for ESOL learners were having a difficult time finding K-12 certified teachers, and as a result, the policy for ESOL programs was changed by the legislature. In 1998, the policy committee of Literacy Minnesota, the Minnesota literacy professional organization, approached the state legislature with data showing a lack of K-12 certified ESOL teachers, and requested a change in the law. The legislature responded by passing a bill that allows anyone with an ESOL, linguistics, or related degree, as approved by the Commissioner of Education, to teach ESOL. Any teacher with a degree in ESOL is automatically approved for teaching that subject.

Certification or training is not required of volunteers in Minnesota, although the Minnesota State Literacy Council provides training and placement. The council provides 12-hour volunteer training programs for the state's nearly 4,000 volunteers, funded with $150,000 of the state's federal grant.

The ABE certificate may be earned by taking six courses at the University of Minnesota in addition to earning a K-12 teaching certificate. A student who has a bachelor's degree but is not K-12 certified may attain the ABE certificate by adding an additional four teaching methods classes to the original program of six. This ABE certificate will qualify the teacher to teach in the ABE system only. This optional certificate has been available for eight years, and while no data have been collected, there is anecdotal evidence of its effectiveness from teachers, program directors, students, and the state director of adult education. These groups report a higher quality of instruction,

teachers who are more skilled, and teachers who feel more responsible for student outcomes. Many local programs require the ABE certificate for full-time (30 hours a week or more) teachers. About three-quarters of teachers in Minnesota are part-time. Of 1,200 current ABE teachers, roughly 250 have ABE certificates.

Because the ABE certificate has only been available through the University of Minnesota, located in Minneapolis-St. Paul, it is difficult for teachers who live outside the area to earn the certificate. As a result, action has been taken to develop a teacher competency–based certificate that would make the certificate accessible to people all over the state through self-study, workshops, and other options. In May 2000, the Governor signed into law a bill that instructs the State Board of Teaching to develop a competency based adult education teaching certificate by January 2002. By creating more opportunities for teachers to attain an ABE teaching certificate, the state hopes to ensure highly trained and qualified teachers in the adult education system.

How did this new competency certificate develop? The effort to develop a more accessible certificate was driven both by the literacy field and the state legislature. Literacy Minnesota worked for almost two years to develop a way for teachers who were not in the twin-city area to attain an ABE certificate. Literacy Minnesota is an organization of roughly 300 members, mostly teachers, and including State Director of Adult Education Barry Shaffer. It has a legislative committee that employs a part–time lobbyist. Literacy Minnesota presented its plans for certification to the State Board of Teaching, a Governor-appointed organization made up of teachers of different levels, except that no teacher of adult education is a member. The Board's response to the proposal was that it was too busy to develop a new certification process. So the members of Literacy Minnesota's legislative committee turned to the state legislature.

In the meantime, the legislature had become concerned about the rising numbers of adult learners in ABE. Largely because of the increase of immigrants, state funding had nearly quadrupled in the last four years, from $8 million to $30 million. The legislature appointed a study group that recommended 20 actions for legislation, one of which was an alternative licensing structure for ABE teachers.

With the confluence of these interests, sponsors and votes were found in both houses of the legislature. A bill instructing the State Board of Teaching to develop an alternative competency based adult education teaching certificate was passed and went into effect July 1, 2000. By creating more options for teachers to attain an ABE teaching certificate, the state hopes to ensure greater numbers of highly trained and qualified teachers in the adult education system.

The field is supportive of these efforts, reports State Director Barry Shaffer, but there is some worry that state leaders will make the ABE certificate a requirement for teachers. There is no interest in doing so, says Shaffer, largely because it would not be practical. "Program managers would have less flexibility to staff their programs according to immediate need. We don't have enough certified teachers in Minnesota to fill the requirements if we made the ABE certification mandatory. But we do want this opportunity to be available for teachers so they can increase their skills and gain expertise in ABE."

Shaffer credits the K-12 certificate requirement for helping adult education teachers who work in school districts to join the union. Many were already members of the K-12 union because of their full-time jobs, and being part of the union and contracting process assures them a salary increase that is negotiated every two years with the K-12 salary increases. However, there is frequently no salary parity, which may be the next issue on the horizon. "If they have to have the same certificate, they should be on the same pay schedule," says Shaffer.

In the future, teachers in Minnesota should be able to earn ABE certificates statewide, and distance learning may assist in that effort.

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Kansas

Eight years ago, when Kansas first received state leadership money from the Adult Literacy Act, state leaders made a commitment to professional development: ten percent of state funds given to programs were to be devoted to professional development. This funding gave the state leverage to look at different professional development activities in programs, and to make sure the emphasis was on providing high quality services to the learner. In 1994, Kansas began an optional adult educator credentialing program. Today, nearly every program has only credentialed teachers on staff.

Out of 36 state funded entities (in 105 locations) in Kansas, only three do not have 100 percent of their instructors and administrators credentialed. The Kansas Adult Education Association (KAEA) and the Kansas Board of Regents (the state agency responsible for the oversight of adult education programs in Kansas) encouraged this achievement by presenting annual awards and publicly recognizing programs for increasing their percentage of credentialed instructors. The credentialing is organized, offered, and monitored by the KAEA Professional Standards Committee.

In April 2000, credentialing became linked to program funding in the Kansas State Plan. It is now listed as one of 20 measures of the nine Indicators of a Quality Adult Education Program, and is tied to funding provided to each program though the state WIA Title II Grant. In addition, another measure of the Indicators of a Quality Adult Education Program involves the extent to which adult education programs have linked individual professional development activities and program improvement plans. Accordingly, state leaders are currently monitoring the credentialing process and the link between professional development and program improvement to determine the impact on program quality and, ultimately, student outcomes.

Credentials are valid for two years. To earn or renew credentials, applicants much accumulate at least 50 staff development points, which are agreed on by the program director and applicant, and may be reviewed by the KAEA Professional Standards Committee. Individual staff development activities include almost anything a program director feels would benefit the program. Each credential applicant receives a

specially designed Adult Education Professional Credential Portfolio to keep track of adult education professional development activities. The process is driven and monitored by program directors, who requested this responsibility since they must insure the link between individual professional development and program improvement. The portfolio is then submitted with the credentialing application to the KAEA Professional Standards Committee, which dispenses the credential certificate.

The same credentialing process is offered to ESOL teachers. It is offered to part-time as well as full-time teachers, mainly because Kansas does not have many full-time instructors. Volunteers are also encouraged to become credentialed, but few have done so. Many volunteers report that they simply do not see the need.

How did the credential develop? In 1992, the KAEA board expressed an interest in developing a credentialing process for adult education teachers. With the support of Dianne Glass of the Kansas Board of Regents, the KAEA board pulled together a committee of literacy volunteers, program directors, board members, teachers, and others, and began a two-year process of retreats, workshops, and research to develop a solid credentialing program. At the end of the two years, the committee presented a draft proposal to the KAEA general membership. The draft was not well-received by many different factions of the membership, and the committee decided to table the effort for several months to spend more time discussing their proposal and its ramifications with a wider audience. Through numerous newsletters, open meetings, and other avenues, the committee worked with the literacy field to craft an acceptable credentialing process.

Four Levels of the KAEA Credential: Minimum Requirements

Level One: a high school diploma or equivalent

Level Two: an Associate's degree

Level Three: a Bachelor's degree

Level Four: a graduate level degree

In addition to the above requirements, all applicants must currently be working in the field of adult education to be credentialed.

When the Kansas credential was first discussed, it met with a great deal of opposition from the field. One strong concern was about the danger of excluding people who were currently teaching. The solution was to grandfather in every instructor already involved in adult education, if that person would commit to at least 50 hours of active participation in a variety of professional development activities during the subsequent two years. Another solution that emerged during the additional year of discussion was to offer the credential at four levels, according to the educational level of the applicant. This was included at the insistence of instructors with K-12 certification or graduate degrees.

The credentialing system was established in an effort to document and enhance the professional stature of adult educators by establishing minimum requirements for teachers and to ensure ongoing professional development. "However," states Glass, "professional development is not the end goal. The goal is to improve student outcomes, such as goals achieved and improved retention."

Why a credential rather than a certification?

The emphasis in the 1991 Adult Literacy Act on a high quality professional staff prompted Kansas adult education leaders to explore the development of a teacher certification process. Members of the Kansas Board of Regents included the KAEA in their preliminary discussions in order to ensure the support of this state professional organization, and began developing a certification program to improve quality of adult education professional staff.

Kansas encourages credentialing for all currently employed adult educators in Kansas, including:

- **Directors, instructors, tutors**
- **Community college, school district, community-based, corporate, corrections, family or workplace literacy employees.**

But at the same time, the Kansas Board of Education, which is responsible for certifying teachers, was moving away from classified certification of teachers at the elementary and secondary levels. Kansas teachers were certified in very specific areas and levels (for example, a teacher would be certified to teach biology, rather than science), and there was an effort by the Board to broaden the

certification levels. In trying to broaden and reduce numbers of certification levels, the Board did not want to add a new certification for adult education teachers. In addition, Kansas State University, which housed the state's largest Adult and Continuing Education master's degree program, did not see the need to support a certification effort, since their graduate-level program had a broader scope than adult basic education.

As a result, leaders of the certification effort began considering the option of credentialing. Planners of the process concede that if Kansas offered adult education programs only though its unified school districts, certification would probably have been enacted, since adult education could have been included as an addendum or specialty to the existing elementary or secondary certification process. However, over half of Kansas's delivery of adult education services is through community colleges, which traditionally do not require teacher certification of their instructors.

Kansas's Credentialing Requirements

Credential renewal requires at least 50 staff development points in each two-year certification period. Points can be earned through activities such as:

College Coursework	**= 15 points per credit hour**
Participation at KAEA Conferences	**= 8 points**
Professional Presentations	**= 5 points**
Self-directed Study	**= 3 points**

Seven hundred teachers have been credentialed altogether, and there are currently 400 teachers with active credentials. Over 90 percent of adult education instructors have at least a four-year degree, and most average twice the 50 hours of staff development required for credentialing.

Staff are paid for the time they are in staff development trainings. These trainings are viewed positively by adult education instructors and their program directors because of the high level of sharing and learning from one another. Teachers feel less isolated, and report really benefiting by learning about the experiences of other instructors in the field. There is anecdotal evidence that the professionalizing effort and, specifically, the credentialing program have increased teacher satisfaction in Kansas. "They love it,"

reports Glass. "They feel like more of a team.... Teachers become more involved as they become more educated and they bring the program quality higher. The best changes filter up."

Because credentialing was recently written into the state plan, there are now commonly accepted definitions, such as what an instruction hour is, and what it means when a student meets a goal. Having uniform definitions will help to provide for uniform data collection. Two months ago, the Kansas Board of Regents started collecting data on whether student outcomes are affected by the credentialing process. Board staff hope to learn what type of professional development activities tend to lead to program and student improvement. That information would allow for the provision of more targeted trainings.

Kansas plans to implement more specific state-funded and statewide trainings on issues that apply regardless of program. "Certain issues are state-level issues, not just program level issues, and we hope to implement more uniformity about what information is known across Kansas," says Glass. She reports a change in teachers and program directors since the credentialing process began. "Teachers are reporting to each other, program directors, and the Board of Regents that they are better equipped, more energized, and feel confident that they are working from a similar philosophy. Teachers are instigating more action research, and are more proactive in questioning leaders. And both instructors and program directors are challenging the state more than several years ago. They are involved and actively participating, not just accepting information. Teachers feel responsible for the overall quality of their program and want to insure that the services being offered to the student are appropriate."

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Arkansas

For over 30 years, Arkansas has required adult education teachers to be certified and, until recently, had nearly 75 percent full-time teachers. Literacy volunteers are also required to receive training either through a local program or through one of Laubach Literacy Action's or Literacy Volunteers of America's training programs.

Arkansas has had teacher certification requirements in place since 1966, when Congress first enacted the Adult Education Act.[24] The state legislature and Department of Education believed that the level of professionalism in adult education should be as high as that in elementary or secondary education. Therefore, Arkansas made a commitment to develop a teaching force made up largely of full-time teachers (25 or more hours per week), believing that this would lead to a more committed, dedicated, capable staff.[25] Arkansas adult education programs are administered by local public school districts, postsecondary technical institutes, technical colleges, secondary vocational centers, educational service cooperatives, and community colleges.

Until recently, full-time teachers in Arkansas comprised roughly two-thirds of the adult educators in Arkansas. With the rapid growth of workplace programs in the state, that percentage has significantly decreased, because the demands of workplace class schedules are difficult and unappealing for many full-time teachers. Workplace classes may be held at any hour of the day or night, and any month of the year; some classes are short-term, and teachers are needed for specific times convenient to the workplace and employee-student. It is often difficult to arrange schedules of full-time teachers, and many full-time teachers are not willing to work at the times needed, such as the 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. shift. Arkansas officials have increasingly employed part-time teachers on an as-needed basis as a more efficient use of resources. Workplace program directors are also

having difficulty locating certified part-time instructors Programs may now appeal to the Department of Workforce Education, Adult Education Section, for a one-year lifting of the certification requirement. The state adult education office is authorized to grant waivers from this requirement to allow non-certified instructors to teach in the workplace.

Other than this recent option of waiving certification requirements for workplace teachers, Arkansas requires all adult education teachers, both full and part-time, to hold a current Arkansas Department of Education teacher's certificate. All full-time teachers must obtain an adult education endorsement on that certificate within four years of being hired. The endorsement can be earned by taking four university graduate level courses on specific issues related to teaching adults. These courses are offered at three universities in the state, two of which offer a master's degree in adult education and one a doctorate.

The certification program is administered out of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education, which is also responsible for teacher certification in public school districts and community based organizations. All certified and non-certified staff are regular employees of the administering entities and are compensated in the same way as the other employees in that district.

Arkansas encourages, but does not require, all part-time teachers to have adult education training. While records are maintained on whether part-time teachers earn the adult education certification, the state has not determined the percentage that has been certified. There is no incentive, such as increased pay, for part-time teachers to receive further training. ESOL teachers do not have any different certification requirements.

Teachers are reimbursed for their tuition from state staff development funds when they earn an adult education certificate. Arkansas has a program funded through federal leadership funds (formerly 353 grant funds) and administered by the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) to reimburse the tuition of full-time and part-time adult education teachers who take college courses to meet the requirements of obtaining

an adult education endorsement. All other state sponsored professional development is administered by the AALRC, which covers travel costs for program participants.

Most volunteers use the LLA and LVA teaching credential, a training process that is recognized and paid for by the state through a grant to the Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc., the statewide umbrella organization for non-profit community-based literacy councils. Volunteer tutors are required to receive training from LLA, LVA, or a local training program approved by the state adult education office.

No research has been done about the effectiveness of Arkansas's teacher certification or full-time teaching efforts, although data that would be helpful in such research is collected. "Although we believe that it does make a difference, we cannot say that it makes a resounding difference," states Emily Barrier of the Arkansas Department of Education. While it does not currently have the funding to research this issue, state leaders hope that eventually a study will be done to assess the effect of these efforts. When Arkansas' new web-based MIS system is implemented during the 2000-2001 program year, data will be easily available to anyone interested in conducting this type of research.

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Conclusion

In a field with limited resources for professional development, adult educators receive only a fraction of the training and information updates on learning that are regularly provided to K-12 professionals.[26] Adult education teaching staff need to feel more in control, more motivated, and more empowered – much like adult learners.[27] Certification can be one way to provide teachers with a sense of their own value and status.

As the experiences of Minnesota, Kansas, and Arkansas suggest, the adoption of teacher standards in the form of certification for adult literacy education requires that the state examine its commitment to the system of adult education. In each of these cases, the state adopted its certification policies on the assumption that staffing and training requirements would yield better teaching and learning results.[28] While a lot of anecdotal evidence supports these assumptions, there is a lack of hard research to substantiate the effect of teacher certification requirements on teaching quality and learner outcomes. Many in the literacy field believe that a better quality system would consist of full-time teachers with adult education credentials, but there is no evidence to show that this would provide higher quality service. Even Arkansas, the only state that has fully implemented these policies, cannot affirm that they make a "resounding difference" in teacher or student performance. The need for research and demonstration in this area is clear.

While we wait for hard evidence about the impact of certification on teaching and learning, we may be witnessing other positive effects of the process of creating certification programs in terms of the consensus building it fosters among various members of the education community. The development of teacher requirements in adult education also tends to be part of a state's more comprehensive approach to adult education. States that have adult education teacher preparation standards demonstrate a broader commitment to their systems of adult education, as shown by the greater funding they devote to adult basic education.[29]

In summary, this *Update* points to two major conclusions. First, several states have worked hard to install certification programs for adult education that are as inclusive

and meaningful as possible. But while there is considerable support for certification as a way to strengthen professionalism in the field, we need to collect data and initiate research that demonstrates whether certification makes a difference in teacher and learner performance. Second, even without hard data, the experience of many states clearly shows that the process of developing certification policies can have a positive effect on the state's commitment to adult education and on the relationships among educators at the state and local level.

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Recommended Resources

The Professional Development Kit: Multimedia Resources for Instructional Decision Making (PDK) Internet: www.literacyonline.org/pdk Phone: (215) 898-0668 or (650) 859-3768 *PDK is a new system to provide sustainable teacher improvement for adult basic education, GED, and English as a Second Language educators. It uses multimedia resources as the delivery system. As a collaboration between the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education and SRI International, the PDK project brings together the latest research and practice on quality professional development.*	National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC) Internet: www.naepdc.org Phone: (202) 624-5250 *The NAEPDC was incorporated to enhance the professional development of state adult education staff. Organized by state directors of adult education, NAEPDC's purposes are to coordinate, develop, and conduct programs of professional development for state adult education staffs; serve as a catalyst for public policy review and development related to adult education; disseminate information on the field of adult education; and maintain a visible presence for the state adult education program in our nation's capitol.*
Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education Internet: www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/ *OVAE supports programs, including teacher development activities, that help young people and adults obtain the knowledge and skills they need for successful careers and productive lives. Click on this site to learn about seven Contextual Teaching and Learning projects that support promising practices to improve teacher recruitment, preparation and professional development.*	National Literacy Summit 2000 Action Draft Agenda Internet: www.nifl.gov/nifl/summit/agenda.html *The National Literacy Summit 2000 process is an effort to engage the adult literacy field in developing a vision and agenda to guide the field over the next decade. The agenda is the core of current and future Summit activities. It presents a summary of the results of Summit discussions in the form of priority areas and related action steps. The process aims at building a consensus through the participation of as many adult learners, practitioners, administrators, researchers and other partners. This Draft Agenda will be replaced by a final version of the Agenda in the near future.*

Literacy Volunteers of America Internet: www.literacyvolunteers.org Phone: (315) 472-0001 *LVA is a national network of 353 locally based programs, supported by state and national staff. Professionally trained volunteer tutors teach basic literacy and ESL. LVA tutor trainer certification is done by LVA affiliates. For information about LVA's training standards ask for the Program Development office at telephone extension 225.*	Laubach Literacy Action Internet: www.laubach.org Phone: 1-888-LAUBACH (528-2224) *LLA is a nonprofit educational corporation dedicated to helping adults of all ages improve their lives and their communities by learning reading, writing, math and problem-solving skills. LLA provides national trainer certification programs.*
Massachusetts Department of Education Adult Basic Education Certification Home Page Internet: www.doe.mass.edu/acls/certification.html *This site has many resources documenting the development of Massachusetts' ABE teacher certification, including the law, interim reports, and ABE Certification Advisory Committee meeting minutes.*	PBS LiteracyLink LitTeacher Internet: litlink5.pbs.org/litteacher *Presented by PBS and the University of Pennsylvania, LitTeacher is a technology-based continuing education resource for adult educators and administrators. LitTeacher offers a variety of professional development courses that explore issues affecting the field today.*
ESL Online Discussion Internet: www.nifl.gov/lincs/discussions/ nifl-esl/english_second_language.html *This is an electronic discussion forum focusing on English as a second language (ESL) instruction for adults. Discussions include such topics as instructional practices, program design, research, and policy. Listserv archives make previous discussions also available.*	National Literacy Advocacy Online Discussion Internet: www.nifl.gov/lincs/discussions/ nifl-nla/nla.html *The main purposes of the National Literacy Advocacy (NLA) list are to provide subscribers with information about national issues that affect adult literacy/basic/ secondary education and ESL legislation, policy, and funding. Listserv archives make previous discussions also available.*

ESL Special Collection Internet: literacynet.org/esl *This site is dedicated to providing adult ESL curricular materials and resources, news in the field, and a forum for adult ESL issues. There is a special section devoted to teachers which includes many links to useful information.*	Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Internet: www.cal.org Phone: (202) 362-0700 or (941) 953-5387 *CAL staff conduct pre-service and in-service professional development for instructional and administrative staff in programs for the teaching of foreign languages and for the teaching of ESL. To go directly to their professional development webpage, link to www.cal.org/public/service/profdev.htm.*

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